

think were based on hate and is truly an unfair and discriminatory situation that occurred in the last 2 weeks.

CENSURING PRESIDENT BARACK OBAMA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Mississippi (Mr. PALAZZO) for 5 minutes.

Mr. PALAZZO. Mr. Speaker, time and time again, the President has violated the boundaries of executive power. He has refused to enforce our immigration laws. He has opened the borders to Syrian migrants against the will of the American people. He has even changed the provisions of his own disastrous healthcare bill.

This week, the administration once again thumbed its nose at Congress and the American people by jeopardizing the gun rights of law-abiding citizens.

Mr. Speaker, the American people are fed up. The American people continue to see the executive branch not only deciding which laws they choose to enforce, but changing and interpreting the laws as they see fit. The White House has become judge, jury, and executioner, in clear violation of the principles on which this Nation was founded.

Today I am introducing a resolution to censure President Barack Obama to serve as a clear rebuke and condemnation of the unconstitutional actions of this President. This is a bold measure, but is one that is necessary to preserve the very institution that we are all honored to serve: the United States Congress.

The Constitution requires that the President shall take care that the laws be faithfully executed. This President has failed to do so on numerous occasions.

The Constitution also requires the President to preserve, protect, and defend the Constitution of the United States. The President has failed to do so.

Not only is the President trying to do our job, but he has failed to do his.

His announced actions on gun control are just the latest example of blatant executive overreach by the President. Congress must fight back. I want to make it very clear. This is not about President Obama. This is about the actions of a President who has encroached too far on the powers of Congress.

Under the Constitution, Congress is an equal branch of government and should be treated as such. We cannot roll over on every executive overreach. We cannot wait to fight next time.

We cannot wait for the next President because it is not about this President or the next President. It is not about politics. It is about preserving the power of the legislative branch against this President and any future President who seeks to use egregious executive action at the expense of Congress.

A resolution of censure of the President has been used rarely, but is not without precedent. It is a way for Congress to fight back against executive overreach. Censuring the President will preserve for the historical and legal record that this Congress at this time disapproves of this President's executive overreach. It is time Congress fights back as an institution.

I urge my colleagues to live up to their oath of office, both Republican and Democrat, to support this resolution to censure the President and put the executive branch on notice that violating the separation of powers and using unconstitutional executive overreach will not be tolerated by Members of the United States Congress now or in the future.

WHITE RIVER NATIONAL FOREST OIL AND GAS LEASES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. TIPTON) for 5 minutes.

Mr. TIPTON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to address an ongoing environmental review process within my district that I firmly believe represents yet another in a long line of abuses of private property rights by the Federal Government and, more specifically, the land management agencies that oversee the majority of the land in the United States.

The outcome of this process will likely set a disturbing precedent under which the integrity of contracts that the Federal Government enters into with private parties is undermined.

The Bureau of Land Management is currently reviewing 65 existing oil and gas leases issued in White River National Forest beginning in 1993. This retroactive review was prompted by a 2007 decision on three of the leases by the Interior Board of Land Appeals in which the BLM was found to have not formally adopted a Forest Service environmental policy analysis that was utilized to make these leasing decisions—basically, what amounts to an administrative oversight.

It should be emphasized that there are extensive environmental reviews that did, in fact, take place and that the BLM played a significant role in that process. The agency argued as much to the Board of Land Appeals during the review.

The fault was simply that the BLM needed to sign on the dotted line, and the Board expressly made this option available to remedy the problem. However, instead of adopting that common-sense approach, the BLM succumbed to political pressure from the environmental extremists and determined to revisit every one of the leases issued since 1993.

The new proposal from the BLM deals with leases in one of two ways. It either imposes new, significantly restrictive stipulations that were not in place at the time of the original leases when they were acquired or it outright revokes the leases.

The Federal Government is acting as nothing more than a highway robber in this case and in many others, robbing citizens and businesses of property that they have bought and paid for, telling us that we should simply be grateful that there is someone looking out for our greater interests.

I highlight this particular process because, should the BLM follow through with certain of its proposed actions, it will set a precedent not only for oil and gas development, but for any lessee or permittee who, in entering into a contract in good faith with a Federal agency, may see their lease or permit threatened with retroactive revocation or severely restricted based on any flimsy pretext.

Many important industries rely on Federal leases and permits, including livestock grazing, recreation, and renewable energy; and no business can successfully operate if its license to do so no longer enjoys protections against arbitrary cancellations or changes, depending on the ideology of the current occupant of the White House.

Numerous stakeholders and local governments recognize that the BLM's final decision would have impacts far beyond those of the specific leases in question and undertook efforts to draft detailed and substantive feedback to the agency.

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This is a very laborious and time-consuming process. Yet the BLM provided only the bare minimum public comment during this period required by law, and the agency's scheduled comment period overlapped with Thanksgiving, Christmas, and the New Year's Day holidays.

It also overlaps another environmental review comment period for the well-known Roan Plateau, which involves many of the same stakeholders and local governments and has been under review in some form since the late 1990s.

As such, several stakeholders and local governments, with the support of several members of Colorado's congressional delegation, requested a modest extension of the comment period. These extension requests are routinely granted by Federal agencies in recognition of the technical nature of these issues; interruptions due to Federal holidays and when there are several similar issues under simultaneous review.

Despite this, the requests in this instance were dismissed out of hand. One can only conclude that the BLM is afraid of the scrutiny that could result from them effectuating a government taking of property rights under the guise of rectifying an administrative error from over 20 years ago.

It is abundantly clear that the BLM intends to ramrod through a decision that will trample on lease owners' rights by canceling or altering leases to the point as to make them economically unviable. This is, unfortunately,

in line with a disturbing trend of Federal agency abuses of private property rights, whether it is the Forest Service's repeated attempts to leverage special use permits to forcibly acquire private water rights, or the EPA's determination to classify every ditch and puddle as a "water of the United States" to further insert itself into the everyday lives of ordinary, hard-working Americans.

Property rights and the integrity of contracts are at the very foundation of our economic system, yet too often Federal agencies casually cast these important considerations aside.

If the BLM is confident that it is making the right decision and is willing to defend it, then they should have no problem providing additional time for the public and other interested stakeholders to be able to comment on the proposed actions in the White River National Forest.

DO NOT LIFT SANCTIONS ON IRAN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. COSTELLO) for 5 minutes.

Mr. COSTELLO of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise to call on this administration to keep intact all existing sanctions on the world's leading state sponsor of terrorism, Iran. Sanctions must remain, and closer scrutiny and more accountability by this administration on Iran's continuing illicit activity must occur. It is imperative for peace, security, and stability in the Middle East and across the globe that we do this.

Iran's conduct over the past few months and the lack of clear and exact leadership by this administration in response is cause for serious alarm. Iran has not changed its tone and conduct since the signing of the deal. In fact, they have doubled down on their unwillingness not to comply with international agreements, and they have created more danger and instability in the process.

Here is the central point why I am speaking on the House floor here today: Once we lift sanctions, we have even less leverage.

So let's look at how Iran has honored their commitments in the past few months and ask ourselves: Do we anticipate Iran will conduct itself in the months and years to come better or worse?

On October 10, Iran carried out a precision-guided ballistic missile test. This violates U.N. Security Council Resolution 1929 and 2231. Now that Iran is prohibited from such testing under the deal, what do they do? They send weapons to Bashar al-Assad on Russian cargo planes. This violates U.N. Resolution 1747. They did that in October.

On November 21, they carried out a medium-range ballistic missile test with capabilities to carry a nuclear warhead. They can't do that either.

Last month, they fired several unguided rockets 1,500 yards from two U.S. vessels.

Just a few days ago, they unveiled a new underground missile depot showing precision-guided missiles that have the capability to hold a nuclear warhead.

What has been the response of this administration? They notify us they will respond with sanctions against Iranian individuals and businesses linked to Iran's ballistic missile program.

What happened since they notified us of that? Nothing. They have walked it back.

Here is my fear, Mr. Speaker. We are forecasting to Iran that they have carte blanche to do as they wish. And once we lift the sanctions, we can expect more of that. Iran is not honoring its commitments, so nor should we.

We know the State Department classifies the deal not as a treaty, not as an executive agreement. It is not even a signed document. It is merely a political commitment. And it is clear Iran is not acting in good faith to our political commitment.

I signed correspondence to the administration requesting that the President "immediately void the deal and restore and/or continue all relevant sanctions on Iran that have been or will be relaxed under the JCPOA."

Let's not concern ourselves if Iran voices outrage or condemnation that we voided a political commitment on the basis that they feel they have somehow honored the deal because, number one, they violated U.N. resolutions since the deal was signed, the Iranian Parliament refuses to ratify the deal, and the Ayatollah forbids further negotiations with the U.S.

The bottom line, Mr. Speaker, is that Iran's U.N. violations clearly violate the spirit of our political commitment to them. Their conduct threatens our national security, it threatens the security of our allies, and it further erodes an already precarious and unstable environment in the Middle East.

Iran isn't honoring its commitments, so nor should we. Let's keep the sanctions in place. Do not lift them.

OBAMA'S EXECUTIVE ACTION ON GUNS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. WESTMORELAND) for 5 minutes.

Mr. WESTMORELAND. Mr. Speaker, I want to start my time by quoting directly the Second Amendment of our Constitution: "A well regulated militia, being necessary to the security of a free state, the right of the people to keep and bear arms, shall not be infringed."

Aren't those beautiful and resounding words? As a man who likes to keep it simple, I appreciate the Founding Fathers not only for their foresight to protect the right to bear arms, but also how plain and simple they made it.

The right of the people to keep and bear arms shall not be infringed upon.

Unfortunately, I think our Founding Fathers spoke too plainly for certain people and certain Presidents to understand. That President may always remind us that he taught constitutional law. Sadly, I have yet to encounter someone in that position who disregards the Constitution so regularly.

Not only does that President trample on the Second Amendment, but he would also trample on Article I, which, as you know, is the Congress and going through them to make laws. That President should have known that regulations regarding buying guns must come from legislation, not by an oral decree.

That President tried to legislate in the Senate several times, but his colleagues refused to do it, even though there was a majority. Now that my colleagues on the other side of the aisle are not in the majority in Congress, I am assuming that this administration is deciding to create their own regulations—the Constitution be damned—because, sadly, there are no checks and balances anymore.

We know even if Congress passes a bill to repeal any type of order that any President makes, it would still have to go to that individual for the bill to be signed. So what are the chances of putting together a bill that some Congress may have seen as an inappropriate action and then send it to the person that created that inappropriate action and expect him to sign it?

I think, Mr. Speaker, one of the things that has so disappointed the American people is the inability to have their Representatives voice their complaints and do their legislative responsibility with an out-of-control government. So each week, as the administration or a group is intent on disregarding the Constitution, people become numb. The American people become numb to these illegal actions.

I think it is time that we brought attention to some of these illegal actions that some Presidents in the past and some Presidents in the future may create. I think it is time that we bring these actions to the attention of the American people and let them know what our Founding Fathers had the intention to do originally, what they intended the Constitution to mean, and how it was interpreted by those very first legislators: President Washington, the Supreme Court, and others.

They took this document as a simple document. It was very plainly written and read. But, unfortunately, we have had Supreme Courts, Presidents, and legislative bodies that have tried to take these simple, basic words and turn them into something that they could use for their benefit, to try to change the way that this world works and how the laws they make are applied to our citizens.

So, Mr. Speaker, we are going to try to do as much as we can in the near future to try to bring this to the attention of the American people and the world, because I think our Constitution